



# ALABAMA ASSOCIATION OF EMERGENCY MANAGERS

EXCELLENCE IN EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

## QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

AAEM Newsletter  
Volume 1, Issue 1

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Volume 1

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## Message from AAEM President, Phyllis Little



### Welcome to the AAEM newsletter!

I am sincerely honored to have served as the President of the Alabama Association of Emergency Managers this year. As you are aware, Mike Evans had to step down after only 6 months as President to deploy to the middle-east with the Alabama National Guard. As President-Elect, I was delegated to serve in his stead for the final months of his term before being sworn in as the Association President at the FY2013 Annual Conference in Guntersville. Mike has been sorely missed, but the good news is that he is back in the United

States and I am sure he will be joining us at Association meetings soon.

As we approach the end of 2013 and the beginning of a New Year, the Alabama Association of Emergency Managers can look back on the success of several initiatives:

(1) The AAEM website, while still a work in progress, is up and running. The store site is now functional and items with the Association logo can be ordered. I encourage everyone to log on at [www.aaem.us](http://www.aaem.us) and see what has been done. The Board encourages your input as to changes and additions that you feel will make the site more user friendly.

(2) The FY2013 legislative trip to Washington, D.C. was a success. The Alabama Legislative Delegation was very attentive to problem issues discussed and receptive to recommendations for change especially with regard to the Emergency Management Performance Grants (EMPG).

(3) The AAEM and the AEMA have renewed our partnership and will be working together on future training and conference opportunities for members of the Emergency Management community and related response groups.

## Board of Directors Hold Strategic Planning Session

The Association board held a one-day retreat in October to discuss the future path of the organization. The publication of this newsletter is an initiative that came out of those discussions. Partnering with Dr. Jeff Ryan and Jacksonville State University to develop and publish this newsletter is, what I hope to be, an ave-

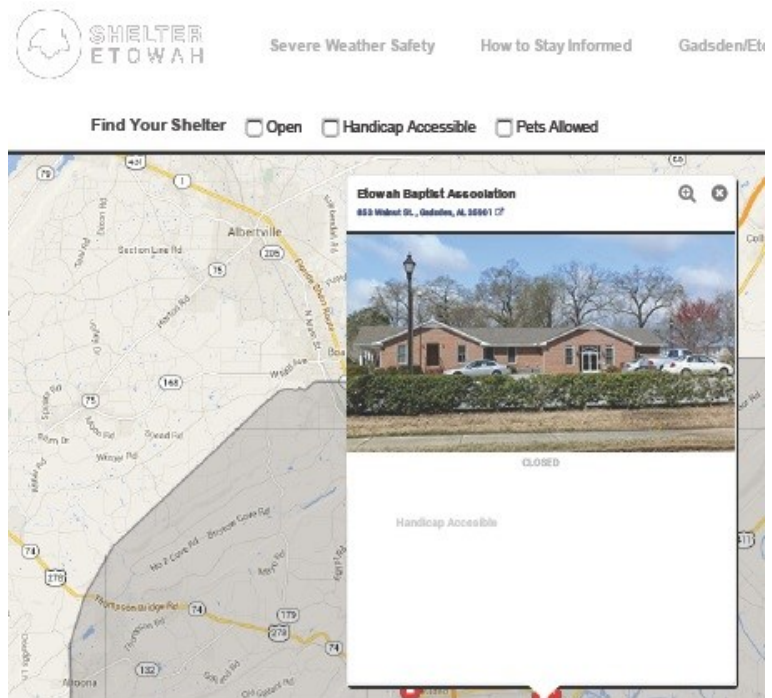
nue for future projects that will continue to enhance emergency management in Alabama. In addition, members will be seeing more information from the Retreat in the coming days with regard to advancing the Association as the "go-to" group for other agencies and elected officials to get information about

emergency management in Alabama, increasing training opportunities, providing a repository of information for members, increasing membership, and providing that "family" of professionals working together that we all need to improve EM capabilities statewide. (Continued page 2).

## Shelter Etowah—A Bold Initiative

*Shelter Etowah* is a bold initiative by the Gadsden/Etowah County EMA to promote the opening of public and private buildings for use by citizens to seek safe haven during tornado warnings. EMA Director Mike Bryant got this started by looking for safe places for people to go when tornadoes threaten. Since the April, 2011 tornadoes, most calls received by the EMA from the public during times of severe weather are from people looking for a safe

place to go. Mike and his staff worked with a private contractor to create a separate webpage where their citizens can go to find information about . *Shelter Etowah* does not involve the long-term opening of a building for mass care. It is only meant for short-term, severe weather sheltering. Information detailed in the website includes location of the building, photo image of the building, handicap and pet accessibility and shelter status (open or closed).



## Message from Director Faulkner, AEMA

In 2013 Alabama continued to be impacted by various hazards. Weather being a primary threat. Twenty-three tornadoes devastated communities across the state and reminded us of the uncertain weather patterns we deal with in Alabama during two unique severe weather seasons.

In addition to the threat of severe weather, we receive thousands of non-weather related threats and hazards recorded in the state's Emergency Management Information Tracking System (EMITS). These threats, hazards and risks remind us why being prepared does not end after the National Preparedness Month or Severe

Weather Awareness Week. We must be ready for the next emergency or disaster.

At the direction of Governor Robert Bentley, also the Incident Commander for the state, Alabama EMA has established standing priorities for disaster response.

(continued on page 6)

## Board of Directors Strategic Planning (continued from page 1)

Continued from Page 1—Phyllis Little, AAEM President

As a board, our goal is to continue the work that began at the retreat with a review of goals and objectives each year. As initiatives are completed, the board will add additional items to continue the work of providing you with opportunities to advance your program.

As Emergency Management professionals, we are planning today for the events of tomorrow. This is a journey that we are all making and by traveling down the road together, we can reduce the wrong turns, smooth out the bumps and make that journey a much smoother process. Contact your area director to see what you can do and join us as we travel the road to advancing Emergency Management in Alabama.

Pictured right is Dr. Jeff Ryan, Head, Department of Emergency Management at Jacksonville State University.



## EM Coalition Meeting in Eastern Alabama



The Emergency Management Coalition of Eastern Alabama convened for its quarterly meeting at the Center for Domestic Preparedness (CDP) recently. The coalition was formed almost one year ago and consists of 25 members, representing more than 10 counties. The Coalition was initiated by Region 7 emergency managers and faculty of the EM Department at JSU. Coalition members are provided opportunities for professional development, which serves to enhance preparedness in the region.

"Those of us who live and work in Northeast Ala-

**Eastern Alabama EM Coalition Members from October 30th meeting.**

bama are very fortunate to have both JSU and the CDP in our backyard," said Jonathan Gaddy, Director of Calhoun County Emergency Management Agency. "Increasing cooperation and communication to support training, networking, and teamwork helps work toward a common goal: protecting the public. The threats we face don't line up along jurisdictional boundaries. It's critical to have a dialogue with our local, state, federal, and military partners. The Emergency Management Coalition provides us with a forum to accomplish that." Since the coalition's establishment in February 2013, representatives from all levels of government have joined together. The coalition even includes volunteer groups.

The AAEM & Jacksonville State University are working together on a newsletter project for the Association. Deborah Gaither (Public Information Committee Chair) is working with JSU EM Department to publish a newsletter that will keep you informed about Association news, local EM events & training news, and other news items regarding emergency management. [Your photos and news items are needed.](#)

If you have any training, special events, that you can contribute as well as pictures of training, events, anything to do with emergency management, best practices, even funny stories, send them to Deborah at [dgaither@tcema.co.talladega.al.us](mailto:dgaither@tcema.co.talladega.al.us)



## Exercise in Monroe County

Photo image left is from Monroe County's Amateur Radio Simulated Emergency Test (SET) exercise on Oct. 5th. Participating were ham radio operators Barry Miller (KG4NCA), Tammy Miller (KJ4QCE), & Mike Stoops (KJ4QCF). EMA personnel were Willie Tomasino, Operations Chief (Volunteer) and J.T. Johnston, Director (N4ZWV). The field activities consisted of setting up the Monroe County Incident Command Post Trailer, Generator Trailer, R-1 Regional Support Unit, and Monroe County's Inflatable Tower. They established contact with SBOC on ham radio HF and the Monroe EOC on 2m. They were also able to test use of the Alabama WAIS system to communicate with the console in the EOC.

## Pictures From the Field



**(LEFT)** Larry Patterson, State EMA Field Coordinator, conducts a workshop with stakeholders at Talladega Super Speedway on Race Day in October, 2013.

**(BELOW)** December 10th, State EMA Winter Weather Exercise being conducted in Division Golf Support Center at Jacksonville State University.



**(LEFT)** Attorney General Luther Strange visits St. Clair County EMA. **(BELOW)** St. Clair County EMA employees train for radiation events with CDV 777



## Pictures from the Field (continued)



**(LEFT & BELOW) Tuscaloosa County Simulated HazMat Exercise. Northport Fire & Rescue Service performing Decon operations (yellow) Tuscaloosa Fire & Rescue personnel (blue)**



**(ABOVE) Gadsden/Etowah County EMA personnel meet with meteorologist James Spann**

**(RIGHT) Gadsden/Etowah County CERT Training group photo**



## AAEM Newsletter

Phyllis Little, President

Anita McBurnett, President Elect

Mike Evans, Immediate Past President

Ronnie Adair, Secretary

Area Directors: Johnny Brock, Area 1, Jessica Tomlin-Seabrook (II), Billy Green (III), Kathy Carson (IV), James Burnett (V), Scott Worsham (VI), Mike Bryant (VII), Tim Payne (VIII)



### Important Dates

Severe Weather Preparedness Week	March 2-8, 2014
Flood Awareness Week	March 16-22, 2014
Governor's Preparedness Workshop	March 31-April 3, 2014
Air Quality Awareness Week	April 28-May 2, 2014
Safe Boating Week	May 17-23, 2014
Heat Awareness Day	May 23, 2014
Hurricane Preparedness Week	May 25-31, 2014
AAEM Annual Conference	June 17-19, 2014
Lightning Safety Awareness Week	June 22-28, 2014

Date of next Board meeting is **February 5th** at 10 a.m. in the ACCA Board Room (members may always attend).

Show off your AAEM Pride! Purchase and Wear AAEM Apparel—

Go to <http://aaem-online.us/online-store/>  
Simply print out the PDF Form and place your order.



## Message from Director Faulkner, AEMA (continued)

The priorities are as follows: Life Saving, Incident Stabilization, Protection of Property, and Needs/Damage Assessments. Establishing and exercising these priorities will ensure that as a state we are better organized, operating with a clear mission and providing necessary services in a timely manner to meet the needs of the impacted citizens.

As the response progresses and standing priorities are met, the disaster recovery phase begins. The beginning of this phase is of vital importance as it will set the stage for many critical components of short and long term recovery. During both response and recovery, the staff of the Alabama Emergency Management Agency works hard to consistently carry out our mission. Some

of the Alabama EMA responsibilities are: Always being prepared for the next event; providing timely and accurate information to elected officials, responders and the general public; managing the flow of resources and personnel to the incident; and, establishing unity of efforts.

This year Alabama EMA established a new tool to help accomplish our mission. The establishment of a Field Response Structure, seven divisions across the state which represents state resources and organized in a geographical area, will shorten the span between the State Emergency Operating Center (SEOC) and the incident. The addition of the divisions will facilitate a better multi-agency state response while providing clearer situational awareness and resource/ personnel needs back to the SEOC in Clanton.

Governor Bentley and the Alabama Emergency Management Agency are constantly looking for new and better ways to respond to the next disaster, and we need you to do the same at home, your school, within your place of worship, or at your place of employment. Being prepared really takes the whole community and you make up the largest part. We hope you will join us in working to make Alabama ready before the next disaster.

**Art Faulkner ,  
Director**

